

Geography Essentials

Human Systems

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Geography Standards: Essential Element Four

HUMAN SYSTEMS

STANDARD 9: The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.

STANDARD 10: The characteristics, distributions, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

STANDARD 11: The patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface.

STANDARD 12: The process, patterns, and functions of human settlement.

STANDARD 13: How forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface.

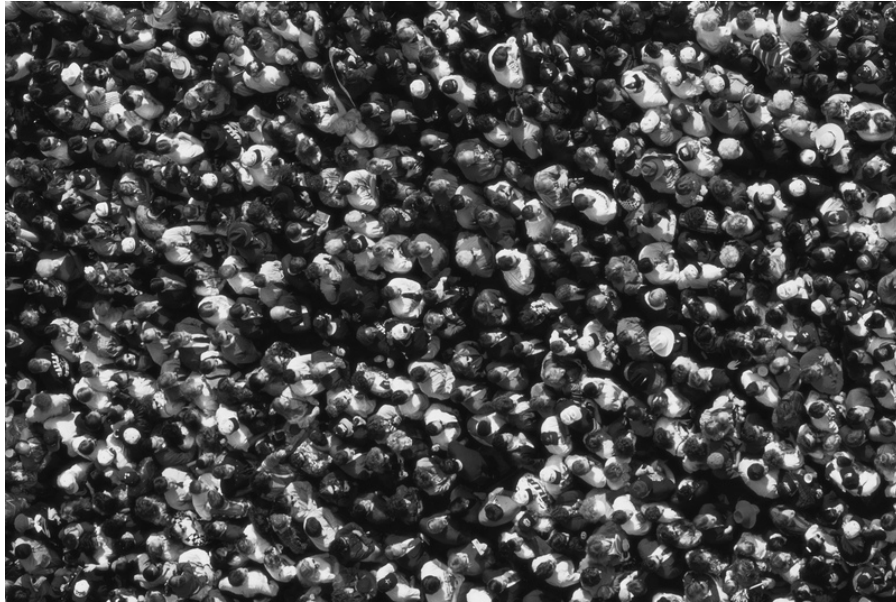
**From the National Council for Geographic Education:
Eighteen National Geography Standards
(<http://www.ncge.org/publications/tutorial/standards/>)**



Human Systems

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The geographic study of human systems involves examining how people organize themselves and their activities, move around, get along, and lead their daily lives.



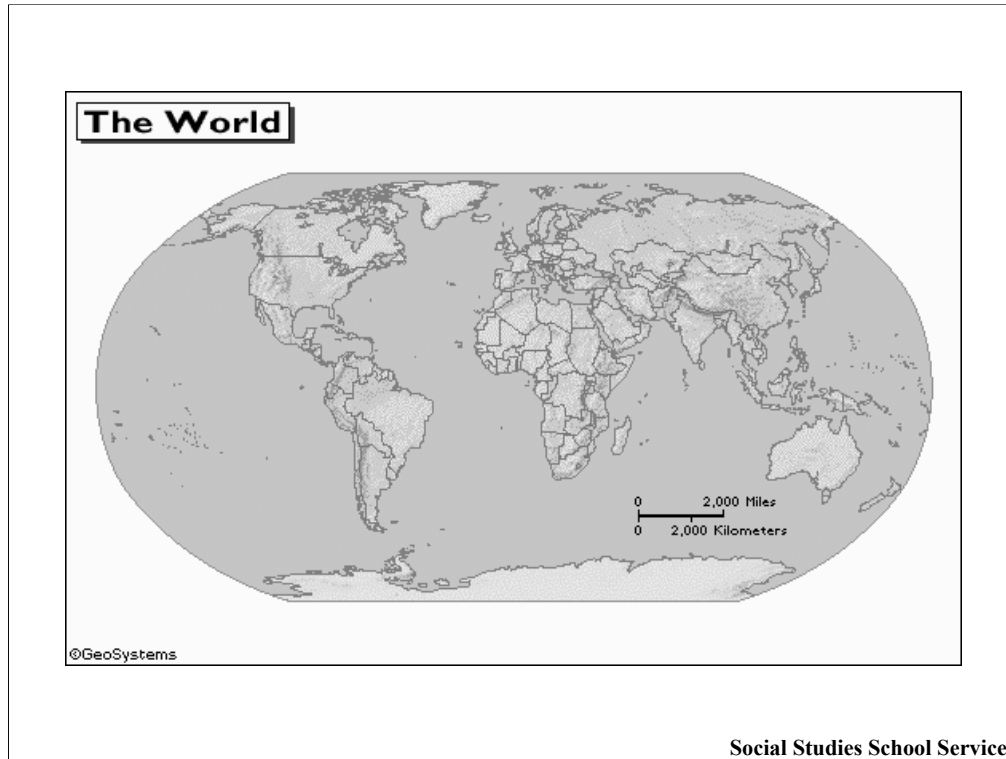
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(Geography Standard 9)

A good way to begin learning about human systems is to discuss some aspects of human population.

Some important terms to know when studying population:

- **Population growth rate:** The rate at which a population is increasing or decreasing, expressed as a percentage of the total population. The population growth rate includes births, deaths, immigration, and emigration (moving away). The population growth rate of the United States was about 0.92 percent in 2004.
- **Birth rate:** The rate at which babies are being born, expressed as a percentage of the total population.
- **Death rate:** The rate at which people are dying, expressed as a percentage of the total population.
- **Rate of natural increase:** The birth rate minus the death rate; this is the same as the population growth rate but does not account for immigration and emigration.
- **Infant mortality:** Out of every 1000 births, the number of babies born who die. In 2004, infant mortality rate in the United States was about 6.63 deaths per 1000 births.
- **Life expectancy at birth:** The number of years a baby born today can expect to live.



“Western” countries, such as the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan, have lower population growth rates, birth rates, death rates, rates of natural increase, and infant mortality rates than developing countries such as many in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

Compare these figures:

United States 2004 birth rate: 14.13 births per 1000 people in the country

Afghanistan 2004 birth rate: 47.27 births per 1000 people in the country

United States 2004 infant mortality rate: 6.63 infant deaths per 1000 births

Peru 2004 infant mortality rate: 32.95 infant deaths per 1000 births

United States 2004 life expectancy: 77.43 years

Uganda 2004 life expectancy: 45.28 years

Why do you think this is the case? What factors contribute to these trends?



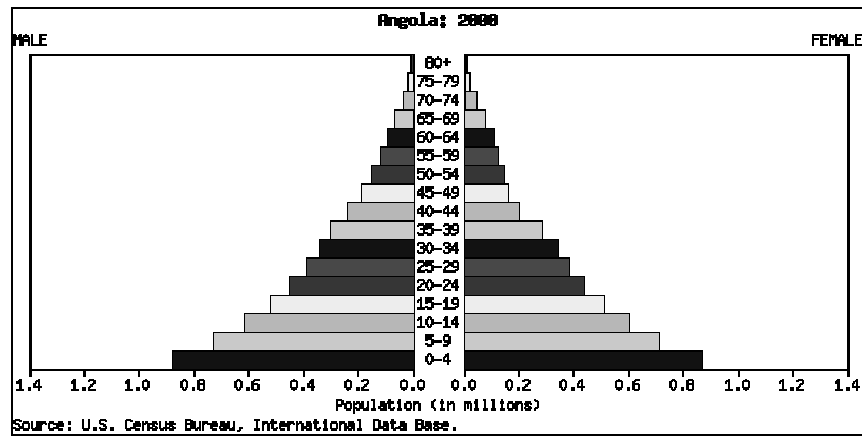
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A complex array of factors contributes to these trends in population figures. Lack of economic opportunities and medical services in many countries creates incentives for women to bear large numbers of children. With a high infant mortality rate and a largely agricultural population base, it's natural that families would want to try to have as many children as possible to ensure that at least some of them survive to help the family earn a living. Some of these surviving children will work on the farm, while others might seek financial rewards in the cities. Cultural and religious traditions also contribute to this trend toward a higher birth rate. Additionally, the majority of women in developing countries are poorly educated and thus do not have the incentive to delay marriage and pregnancy that educated women with good job opportunities have. These uneducated women tend to remain unaware of methods of contraception, which are often expensive, unavailable, or frowned upon by men and other members of their society.

As economic opportunities increase, particularly for women, families tend to have fewer children at later ages. This is what has occurred in Western countries such as the United States.

Infant mortality rates and death rates are directly related to quality of and access to medical care. Most people in developing countries have difficulty accessing and affording what people in Western countries consider the most basic sources of medical care, such as antibiotics.

Lack of access to clean water is also a major problem for many people in the developing world.



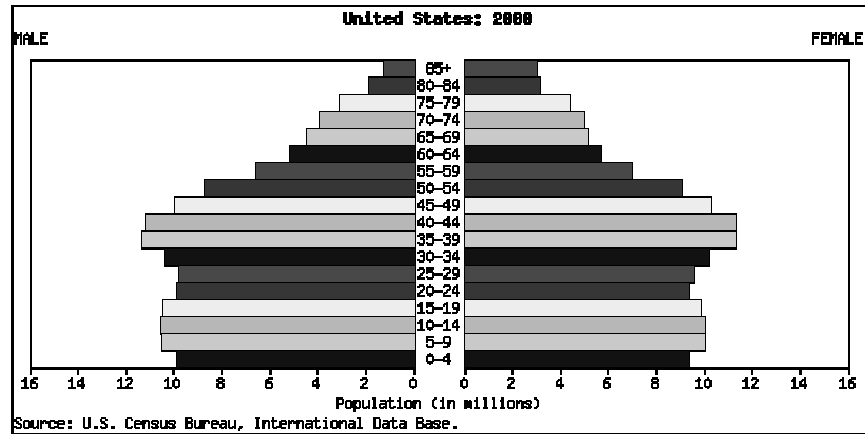
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Despite higher infant mortality rates, developing countries tend to have much younger populations than Western countries.

The graph in this slide is called a population pyramid. It shows the population of Angola, a southern African country, as distributed over various age groups in the year 2000. The left side of the pyramid represents males in Angola, and the right side represents females.

The bottom lines show the numbers of people in the youngest age groups. The top lines show the numbers of people in the oldest age groups. For example, the royal blue line at the very bottom shows the number of people ages 0–4. The tiny yellow line almost at the top shows the number of people ages 75–79.

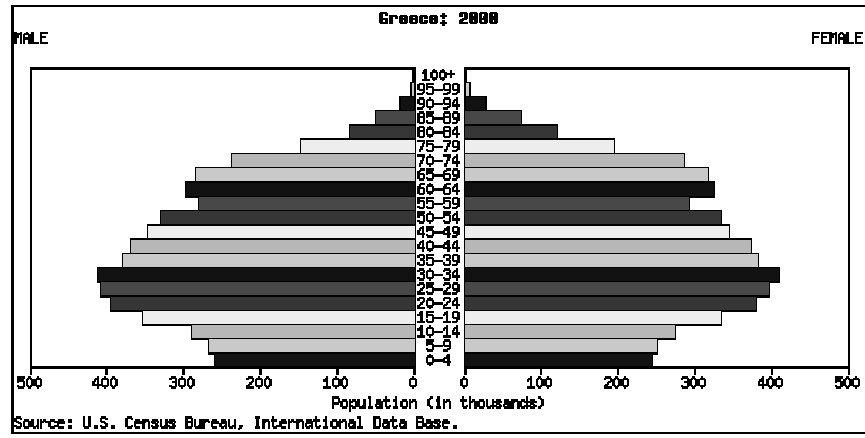
As you can see from this population pyramid, Angola has many more people in the younger age groups than in the older groups.



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This is a population pyramid for the United States in the year 2000. What differences do you notice? Are there more people in the younger, older, or middle-age groups in the United States?

This graph reflects the impact of the “baby boom” of the late 1940s through the early 1960s. Birth rates reached a peak during these post-World War II years. In 2000, baby boomers were in their late 30s to early 50s, represented as the bulge in the middle of the pyramid.

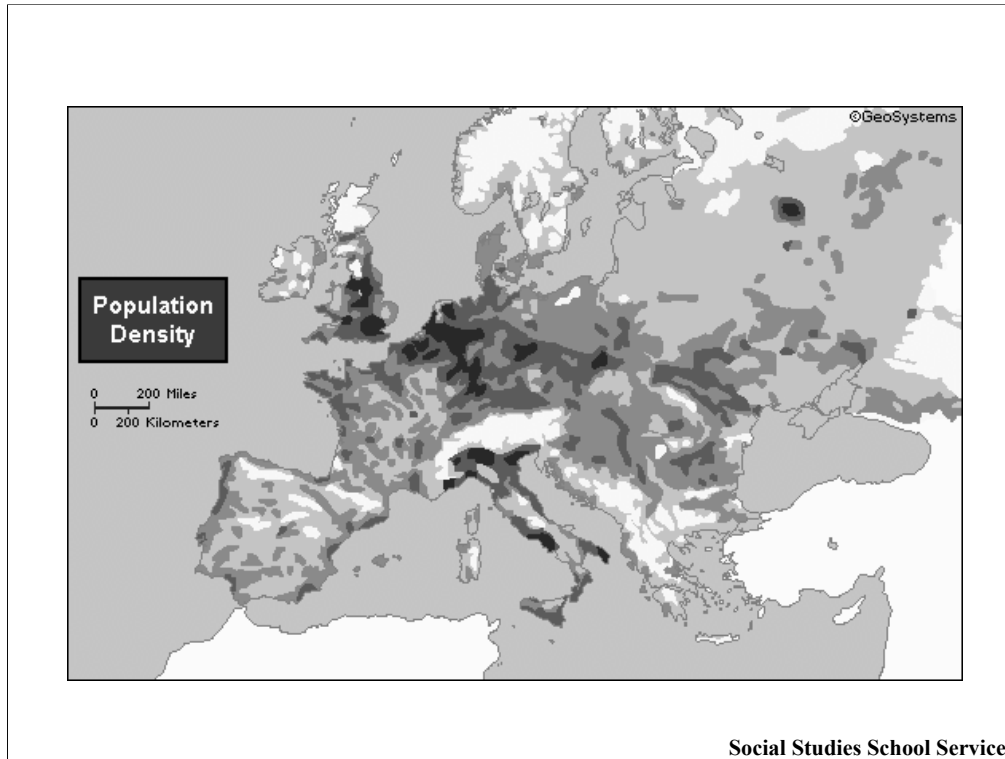


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This is a population pyramid for Greece in the year 2000. How does it compare to the population pyramids for Angola and the United States?

The largest numbers of people shown here are in the age groups 25–29 and 30–34. Thus we can tell that about 30 years ago, Greeks were having significantly larger numbers of children than they are today.

Why do you think this might be the case?



We can also use maps to display population statistics. Compare this map of Europe's population density with the one on the next slide showing the population density of South America.

Which continent is more densely populated? Why do you think certain areas of each continent are more densely populated than others?



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Migration has occurred throughout human history. For various reasons, groups of people have moved in large numbers from one place to another, and in the process have changed the cultural and physical landscape of the places they've inhabited.



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One of the migrations that you're probably familiar with is the massive influx of immigrants from Europe into the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

How did this wave of immigration alter the cultural and economic characteristics of the United States? Think about what you've learned in your history classes.



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Sometimes, geographical and political factors serve as barriers to migration. For example, the Rocky Mountains were a major barrier to settlers who wanted to cross the North American continent in the 19th century. The Oregon Trail, over which many settlers traveled, provided an easier route for crossing the mountains than the other trails did.



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Oceans also act as natural barriers to migration. Populations couldn't migrate across oceans until they developed the technologies that enabled them to do so.



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What factors encourage migration? Why do you think people choose to leave their homelands?

When discussing migration, we need to consider “push” and “pull” factors. Push factors are existing conditions in a person’s homeland that motivate that person to leave and seek a new place to live. Pull factors are conditions in another country that draw people toward that country.



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Common push factors include lack of jobs, war or unstable political conditions, drought or other factors making agriculture difficult, and religious or other types of persecution.



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Common pull factors include job opportunities, families or friends who have already emigrated, and stable political conditions.



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Why do people move from rural to urban areas? Why has this occurred in the past, and why does it continue today throughout the world?



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With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, many people began relocating from rural areas to cities in response to new work opportunities that arose in the cities.



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Today, as cities grow larger and offer people increasing job opportunities, rural-to-urban migration occurs frequently—even in developing countries that rely heavily on agricultural production. Many who move to a city, however, can't find adequate work and end up living in dire poverty in urban slums.



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Migration can have a significant impact on the characteristics of a place. As people move into an area, they open stores, restaurants, and other services for the people from their part of the world. New immigrants also establish churches, mosques, and other places of worship that reflect the religious traditions they've brought from their home countries.

How has your city or area changed as immigrants have arrived from different countries, both in the recent and more distant past?



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Sometimes, immigration can lead to conflict in the areas where new immigrants have arrived. This usually occurs because of perceived economic threats (“they’re stealing our jobs”) and racism.



Social Studies School Service

Migration can have a profound effect on the environment. Consider the thousands of people who made their way west across the Great Plains during the mid- and late-19th century. They created trails, killed bison and other animals, and drastically changed the landscape when they established farms in their new homes.

In what other ways do you think migration affects the natural environment?



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Today, the large-scale rural-to-urban migration that occurs throughout the world has a profound impact on the infrastructure of urban areas. Cities often haven't planned for a large influx of new residents, so there's usually not enough housing for all the new immigrants; consequently, new housing projects have to be built in order to accommodate the increased demand for places to live. In developing countries, many newcomers end up living in makeshift settlements on the outskirts of the cities. These settlements usually lack access to the city's sewage, water treatment, and garbage disposal systems, making life difficult for the inhabitants.

Police, fire, medical, education, and transportation services are also affected by large influxes of migrants into a city. Cities are often unprepared to provide these services to large numbers of new residents.



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Major environmental changes (such as global warming or desertification) may have a significant impact on the earth's population distribution in future decades. For example, people who live in areas with limited access to water might eventually need to relocate in order to survive. If, as many scientists predict, coastlines and islands become flooded as a result of global warming, people from these areas will need to find new homes in other locations.

What other environmental factors can you think of that might alter the distribution of the earth's population?



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Some countries have taken political steps to limit population growth. China has perhaps the strictest policy, limiting most couples to one child; however, it's difficult to enforce this regulation.

What would you think if the United States implemented similar policies? What are the pros and cons of the government implementing policies to curb population growth? Can you think of any other ways in which a country could limit its population growth?



Social Studies School Service

(Geography Standard 10)

What is culture? It can be a difficult word to define, but it commonly refers to a group of people's language, customs, religion, belief system, technology, art, food, and traditions. Many people identify with more than one culture, such as Asian Americans, Native Americans, an Indian immigrant to England, or anyone else who has been deeply affected by more than one set of languages, customs, etc.



Social Studies School Service

Cultural similarities hold together many large regions of the world. For example, most of Latin America and Spain share a common language, religion, and many customs and traditions.

Cultural differences can also be found within countries who have taken in substantial numbers of immigrants from different parts of the world.

Often, cultures cross national boundaries when members of one culture live in an adjacent country. Examples of this include the United States and Mexico (with many Mexican immigrants living in the United States) and Iraq, Iran, and Turkey, which all have Kurdish populations. The Kurdish culture does not have its own country but lives within and across the borders of these three countries, leading to frequent difficulties for the Kurds.



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What do you think it would be like to move to a place where the culture is very different from what you're used to? How would you adjust? What would you like to learn from other cultures?



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Think about how the different cultures that live in a specific place can affect that place's characteristics. For example, most cities in the United States have significant populations of people who have recently moved from Latin America. Spanish language billboards, newspapers, radio stations, and stores selling Latin American food and other items can be found in these cities, reflecting the needs and tastes of the Spanish-speaking population. In some of the largest cities, this trend holds true for a variety of cultures, such as the Iranian community in Los Angeles and the Polish community in Chicago.



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Many cities have Chinatowns, and some have “Little Italies” and other ethnic enclaves. Some of these neighborhoods, such as Chicago’s Taylor Street neighborhood, are vestiges of vibrant immigrant communities from earlier in the city’s history. (Taylor Street has several Italian restaurants.) Others continue to be vibrant communities for recent immigrants, such as the Chinatowns in San Francisco and New York.



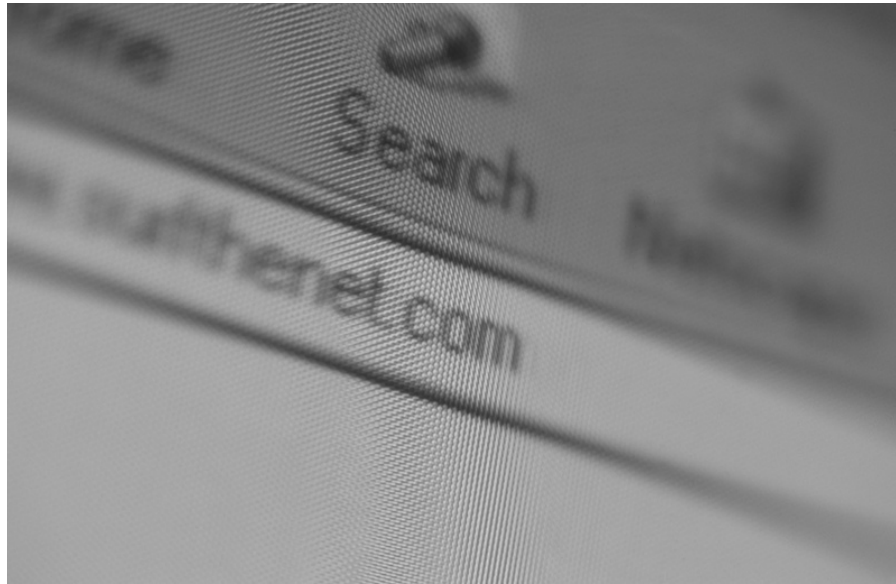
American culture has made its way around the world. McDonald's fast food restaurants can be found in "more than 119 countries on six continents" (according to the McDonald's Web site), and many other American fast food restaurants have international branches as well. People around the world view Hollywood movies, watch American TV shows, and drive American cars.

How do you think this "Americanization" affects people in other parts of the world? What might be the pros and cons of this trend?



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The process by which cultural influences spread from one place to another, including the global spread of American culture, is called “cultural convergence.” Advances in communication and transportation technologies facilitate this process. Different cultures converge as people around the world communicate more easily with one another through e-mail, fax, and telephone; the fact that people can also more readily visit other parts of the world also contributes to cultural convergence. Examples of cultural convergence include the popularity of Chinese food in many countries, the availability of American TV in most parts of the world, and the fact that English is considered the most important language for businesses and scientific communications in many areas of the world. Can you think of other examples?



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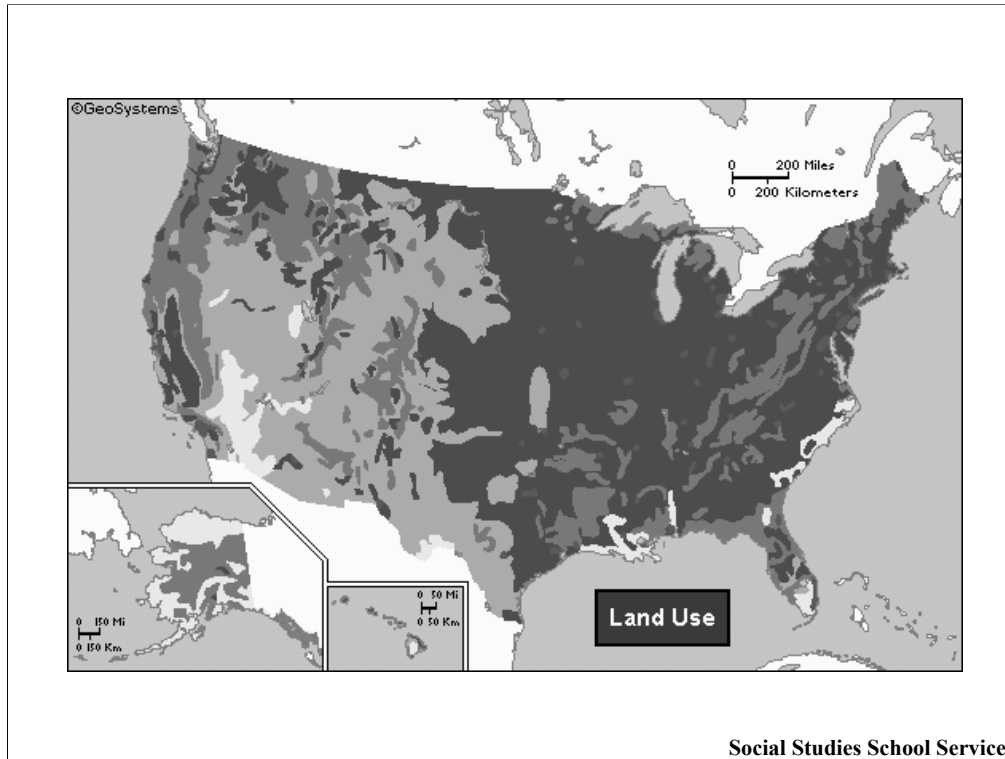
New technologies do not always result in cultural convergence. In fact, technology can contribute to “cultural divergence,” in which cultures assert their independent identities. For example, some cultural groups have created Web sites and listservs to promote their separate identity and, in some cases, a perceived sense of superiority to other cultures.



Social Studies School Service

(Geography Standard 11)

Economic activities can be divided into primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Primary economic activities involve extracting raw materials and natural resources. Examples of primary economic activities include fishing, farming, mining, and logging.



To determine where primary economic activities occur, it can be helpful to look at a land-use map such as the one shown in this slide. On this map, farming occurs in the dark green areas and forestry in the lighter green areas. This helps you understand where in the United States farm crops and logs are produced and extracted.



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Secondary economic activities involve manufacturing raw materials into goods, often in a factory.

Examples include making paper from wood and clothing from cotton.

Think about where secondary economic activities take place in your city or state. Is there a particular area devoted to manufacturing?



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Tertiary economic activities are the services that help businesses and individuals. There are many types of tertiary economic activities, including banking, transportation, advertising, telephone services, hospitality, and tourism.

In what parts of your town or state do tertiary economic activities occur? You'll probably find that this type of activity is more spread out than manufacturing (secondary economic activities), which tends to be more concentrated in specific parts of town.



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Picture a map of your town. Could you divide it into sections where different types of economic activities occur? Where do your parents work? Where would you go shopping for a new outfit? Where do you go out to eat? Where would your parents go if they needed to apply for a bank loan or get their car fixed?



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The economic activities of towns in the United States have changed a good deal over the past few decades. Traditionally, towns had downtowns and “Main Streets” where most people went for all their shopping and business needs. Today, however, many downtowns no longer provide these functions. Instead, people tend to shop in malls or large stores on the outskirts of town. Most of the stores in these areas are “chains” owned by companies that have branches in other states, regions, and countries.

With traditional downtowns generally in decline, some cities have redeveloped these areas into tourist attractions or specialty shopping and dining zones. Other downtowns have become virtual ghost towns, with very few stores, restaurants, or services.

Does your city have a lively downtown? Where do most people shop? Where do most people head when they go out for dinner or lunch? Where do you and your friends like to spend your time?



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In recent decades, manufacturing has also declined in the United States. Many companies now rely on foreign factories to produce their goods, even if this means sending raw materials all the way to China to be manufactured into things for Americans to buy. Companies do this because the cost of labor (workers) is often much lower in other countries than in the United States, and many other countries also have less strict labor and environmental laws.

This trend has caused many factories to go out of business and close their doors. Has this happened in your area? How do you think the closing of a factory impacts a town and its residents? What if the town has relied on the factory for a long time as a primary feature of its economy?

Think about how the closing of a factory might impact a town's economy and the personal lives of the people in the town.

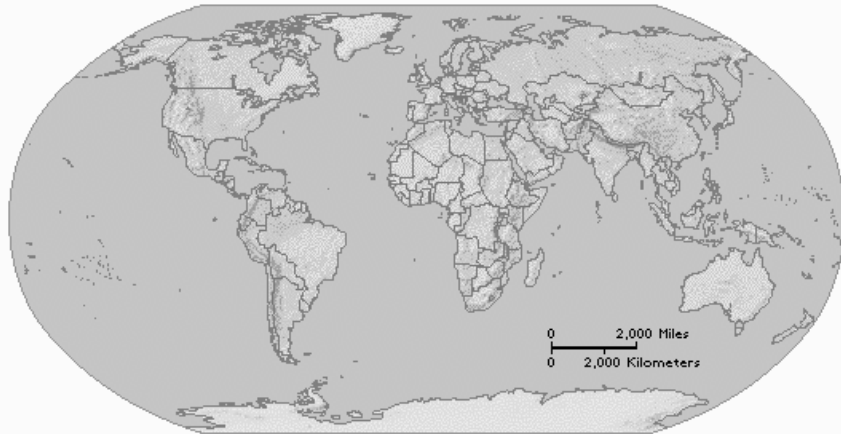


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Major business establishments (including factories, malls, large stores, banks, and theme parks) have “market areas” from which they draw most of their customers and on which they focus their marketing and advertising efforts. Media outlets such as TV and radio stations and newspapers serve their own market areas and also help other types of businesses reach people in their own market areas.

What market areas exist in your community?

The World



Social Studies School Service

Like most countries, the United States trades with many other countries in the world to sell (export) goods manufactured here and obtain (import) goods manufactured elsewhere.

America's main import partners (countries we buy things from) are Canada, Mexico, China, Japan, and Germany. The United States' main export partners (countries we sell things to) are Canada, Mexico, Japan, and the United Kingdom.

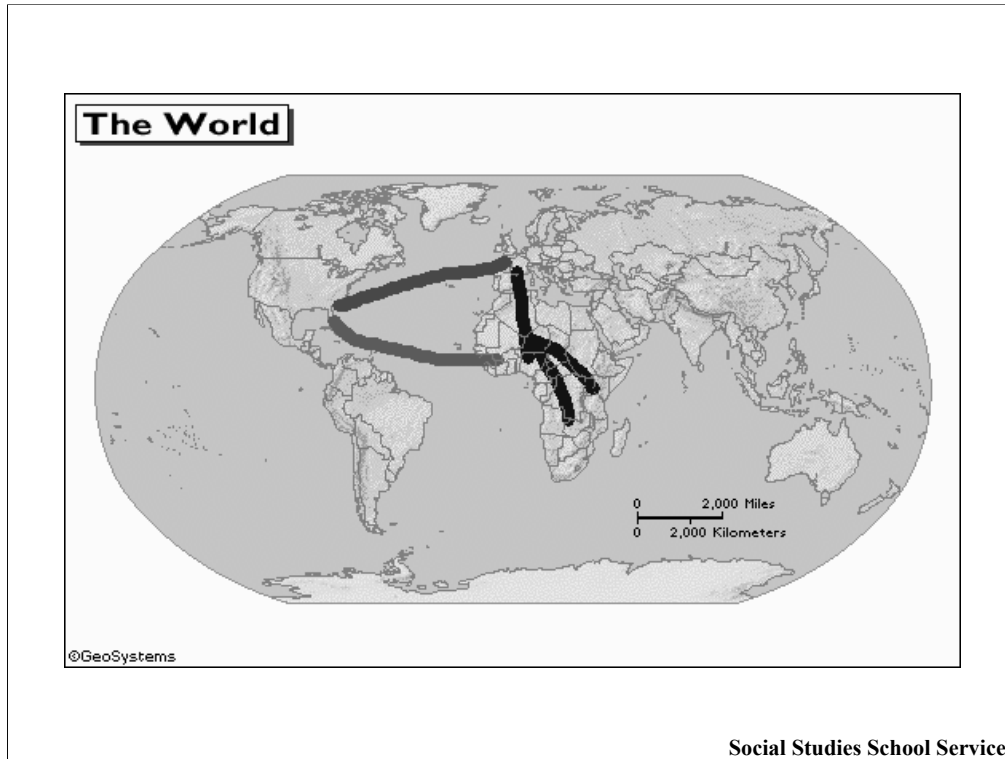
Find these countries on a map. Why do you think the United States imports from and exports to these countries more than other countries?



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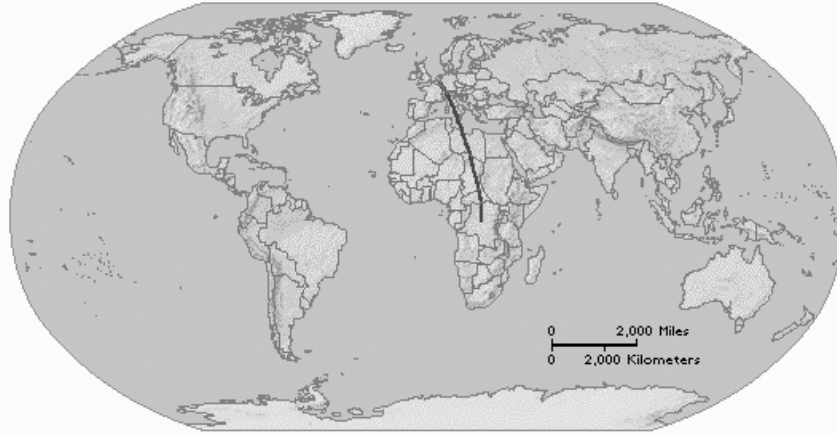
Sometimes, trade between countries gets interrupted due to natural disasters or political instabilities, including war. How do you think these interruptions might affect the lives of people in those countries?

For example, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) sometimes makes the decision to raise oil prices. The United States buys much of its oil from OPEC countries. How would an increase in prices affect the daily lives of people in the United States? How might a price increase impact the production of goods that the United States intends to export? How might changes to exports affect the lives of people in the countries to which the United States sends its goods?



One notorious historical trade route involved a “triangular trade” between Europe, Africa, and North America and the Caribbean during the era of slavery. European countries obtained slaves from Africa and sent them to work on the farms and plantations of the Caribbean and the southeastern United States. These farms and plantations relied on slave labor to grow cotton, tobacco, and other crops. They sent these crops back to Europe, where they were manufactured into clothing and other goods. The money from these manufactured goods was used to fund the capture of more slaves in Africa, and the cycle continued.

The World



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Other colonial relationships have existed between European countries and their colonies. In general, the colonizing country would send people to the colony to extract raw materials, which were then sent back to the colonizing country and manufactured into consumer goods. Colonizers often used the natives as forced labor to help extract raw materials from the colony.

This map shows the colonial relationship between the tiny European country of Belgium and the huge area of the Congo that Belgium claimed as a colony in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Locate Belgium and the Democratic Republic of Congo (as it's now called) on a world map in your classroom or in an atlas. How do you think such a small country could colonize such a large geographic area?



Today, the United States imports labor from many countries, including a large number of people from Mexico and other Latin American countries. Much of this labor is seasonal, which means that people come just for a specific period of time (generally the growing or harvesting season on American farms) and then return to their home countries. These seasonal workers are also referred to as “migrant workers” since they move from place to place in search of work.

What economic benefits do United States companies and farms obtain from hiring migrant workers? What difficulties might exist with this employer-worker relationship?



Businesses consider all kinds of different reasons when choosing a location, but patterns exist that indicate where a certain type of business might likely be located. For example, in the late 19th century, factories that produced steel and other industrial materials were established in the “manufacturing belt” of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, western Pennsylvania, western New York, southern Michigan, and southern Wisconsin. Manufacturing in this region has declined significantly since the 1970s because manufacturing as a whole began to decline and the South and West became more economically active regions.

The “manufacturing belt” became the country’s premier industrial area for a number of reasons, including access to transportation routes over the Great Lakes and railroads, access to raw materials, political interests that encouraged companies to locate in these areas, and the rise of the automobile industry in southern Michigan, which required convenient sources of steel.



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Think about other types of industries and businesses. What factors make them more likely to be located in certain places than in other places? What role do climate, bodies of water, agricultural activities, and transportation routes play in an industry's or a business' decision of where to be located?

These factors still matter, but they play less of a role today than they did in the past. More companies are involved in service industries (tertiary economic activities) and advances in telephone, fax, and computer technologies enable businesses to be located farther away from the companies and consumers they do business with than was possible in earlier times.



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Changes in transportation can have a significant impact on where businesses decide to locate themselves and on how products get distributed to consumers. One famous example of this is the advent of refrigerated rail cars in the late 19th century. Before refrigeration, produce and butchered livestock could only be distributed within a small region because the meat and vegetables quickly spoiled if not used right away. Refrigerated railcars allowed farmers and ranchers to transport these products across the country. People in the Midwest could now eat fresh California lettuce, and people in California could eat beef from Chicago or Colorado. Farmers began to buy land farther out from the cities because they could now rely on refrigerated transportation to take their goods safely to market. They could also acquire larger plots of fertile land and produce even more food.



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Air transportation has had a significant impact on modern economic activities. Planes not only help deliver products around the world and allow businesspeople to attend far-away meetings, but many people frequently use express mail services to deliver letters and packages overnight from the United States to places as distant as China and Russia. How do you think this ability has affected global business?



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Oil pipelines offer another example of how inventions can change the geographic aspects of economic activities. Oil can now be extracted from a location hundreds of miles from where it gets shipped to refineries.



Social Studies School Service

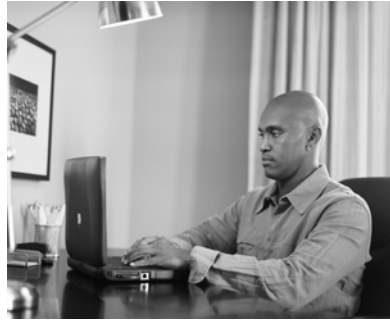
For example, the Alaska Pipeline is 800 miles long. Its approximate route is shown on the map in pink. Oil extracted from Prudhoe Bay in northern Alaska gets sent down the pipeline to Valdez, where it's put onto ships that transport it to places in the lower 48 states for refining. The main reason for constructing this pipeline was because Prudhoe Bay stays frozen during much of the year and therefore cannot accommodate ships, whereas Valdez remains ice-free.



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Land values often affect where businesses get located. If property costs are too high, businesses may choose to be located in less expensive areas. On the other hand, some businesses don't mind paying premium land prices for convenient or desirable locations.

Similarly, the locations of businesses can impact land values. For example, when entrepreneurs redevelop urban neighborhoods with new stores, restaurants, and apartment buildings, people who owned homes in the neighborhood before the redevelopment see the value of their houses increase dramatically, although their property taxes sometimes rise so high that they can no longer afford to live in the neighborhood. If you walk or drive around a city, it's generally not difficult to determine which parts of town have the highest land values and which have the lowest.



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In addition to transportation, communication developments have also had a profound impact on global economic activities. What examples can you think of that illustrate this trend? How do you think cell phones, faxes, pagers, computers, and other communications technologies have altered business practices in the United States and in other countries?



Social Studies School Service

(Geography Standard 12)

Human settlements range dramatically in size from individual rural houses to the world's largest cities.



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Before humans settled into villages, towns, and cities, they lived as hunters/gatherers, following game as it migrated with the seasons.



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The development of agriculture allowed people to cultivate the land and grow a surplus of food, which they could then store and use during the winter or in the event of a drought or other shortage. The food surplus meant that many people could spend time doing other things instead of constantly roaming in search of food. Agriculture also curbed migration and mobility, however, because people had to stay close to home in order to tend to their fields. Agriculture therefore helped lead to the rise of settlements.



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These settlements became villages, towns, and cities. Some people became full-time craftspeople, merchants, or even politicians; as towns and cities became larger and more complex, specialized leaders emerged to govern and maintain control. As these settlements continued to grow and build their surpluses, they had to defend themselves from other settlements that wanted to seize their food surplus or other things the city had to offer.

People moved into permanent settlements for a variety of reasons, including to find markets for their goods, for military protection, to be near centers of religious worship, and for social contact.



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As cities grew, farming practices changed significantly. New transportation routes were needed to get crops to the city markets. Fewer workers were available since many people moved into the cities, but advances in farm technology meant that tending to a farm required fewer workers.



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Small roads and footpaths provided the earliest rural-urban transportation links. The Industrial Revolution later brought canals, steamboats, railroads, and eventually cars and trucks to transport agricultural goods from farms to cities.



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Cities continue to grow today. In what ways do you think population growth might impact an urban area? How can growth affect a metropolitan area's infrastructure (transportation, water supply, sewage treatment, garbage collection, police and fire protection services, etc.)? What happens to job availability when a city's population grows?

How are these factors affected when a metropolitan area's population declines?



Social Studies School Service

Different models can illustrate the relationship between parts of a city and its surrounding areas. The “concentric zone” model describes a city center as the main business and financial district of a city, with the highest population density and the tallest buildings. As you move away from the city center, you find decreasing population density, lower buildings, and more residential neighborhoods. Smaller communities and farmland encircle the city.

How accurately do you think the concentric zone model describes cities in the United States? Older cities such as New York, Boston, and Chicago tend to follow this model: all these cities have large, skyscraper-filled city centers, and outer areas with smaller business and residential districts. If you travel far enough out of the city and its suburban areas, you will arrive at farmland.

Newer cities such as Los Angeles and Phoenix do not follow the concentric zone model as closely as older cities do. These cities have downtowns but also have several other major business centers to which large numbers of people commute for work. Many residents of Los Angeles never venture downtown, unlike residents of older eastern cities.

How well does the concentric zone model apply to cities with which you’re familiar?



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Why do some cities follow the concentric zone model more closely than others? It primarily has to do with the ways in which the cities were developed. Older cities developed downtowns, then spread to accommodate a population that relied on streetcars and commuter rail. Newer cities were built to accommodate automobile transportation, which allows people to commute anywhere without relying on specific “lines” of travel that cross only a few areas of the city.

Even the oldest cities and their suburbs have changed in the past couple decades. Today, many people live and work in the suburbs, which have developed their own significant business centers. Many city dwellers commute to the suburbs, and many of these people rely on their cars rather than commuter rail.



The “sector model” of urban organization divides cities into different sectors based on the activities that occur in each area. For example, a city may have a manufacturing sector, a financial and professional services sector, and several residential sectors.

What sectors exist in your town? How distinct are the divisions between sectors?



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In recent years, the structure of urban areas has changed in some noticeable ways. Suburbs have grown dramatically not only in terms of population and area, but also in the amount of business conducted there. Many companies have decided to locate their headquarters or major offices in the suburbs, often moving from downtown locations in the city.

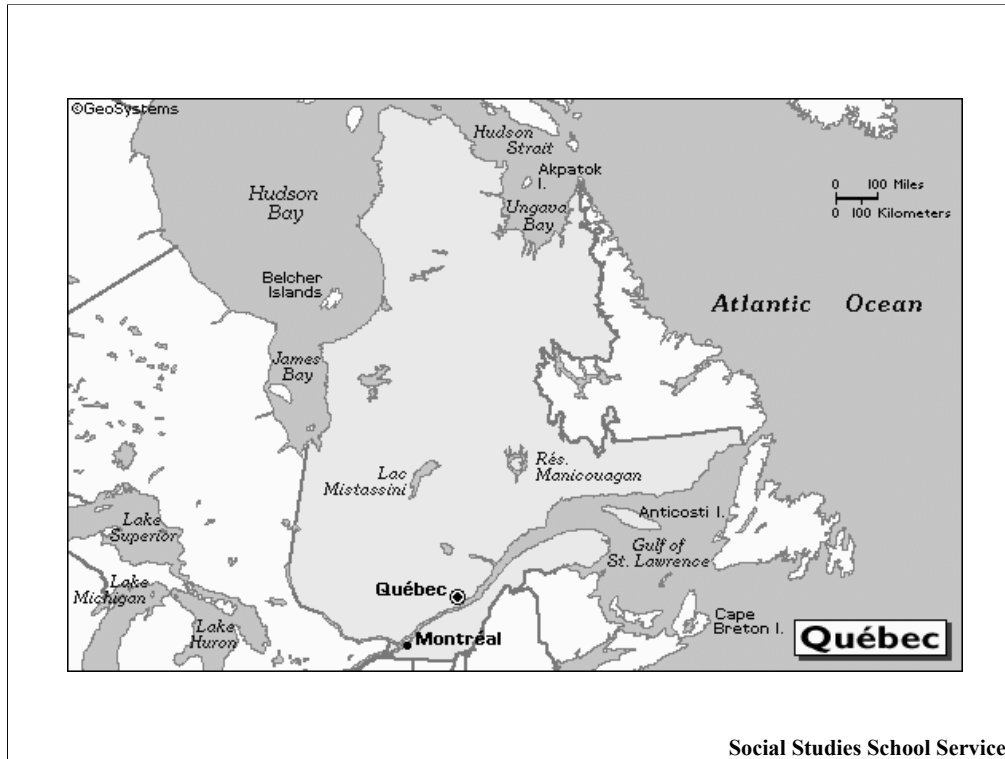
Large, new suburbs with major business centers and significant retail space are called “edge cities.” They’re generally located along major highways, making them convenient for people to reach; however, they also significantly increase traffic along those routes.

More people live in the suburbs now than in the past. Many of these people work in the suburban areas where they live, allowing them to abandon the traditional commute downtown. Many other people, however, live in the cities and commute to the suburbs which increases traffic congestion leaving the city.



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In addition, “metropolitan corridors” have developed, connecting one metropolitan area to another. This phenomenon occurs in the Northeast, where Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. are separated by increasingly densely populated areas rather than wilderness or farmland. Metropolitan corridors also appear increasingly between smaller cities; for example, Interstate 90 acts as a corridor between Spokane, Washington and Coeur d’Alene, Idaho.



A city's location is often closely related to the functions it serves. Cities located on harbors, such as Sydney, Australia; Vancouver, British Columbia; and San Diego can handle the trade and transportation opportunities provided by large ships. Cities along the Great Lakes or on major rivers, such as Chicago or St. Louis, can take advantage of the transportation offered by these bodies of water as well as the railroad routes that run through these cities.

Locate Montreal on the map of Quebec shown in this slide. It's hard to tell here, but Montreal is a city on an island at the point where the St. Lawrence River meets the Ottawa River. This river system empties into the Atlantic Ocean. What might be some of the reasons that Montreal developed as a settlement in this location? What other places in the world can you think of that developed in strategic locations such as this one?



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(Geography Standard 13)

People have divided the world in countless ways to help them make sense of and maintain order in their surroundings. For example, political and economic divisions exist on the local, national, and global level.

Political divisions include countries, cities, counties, and voting wards; economic divisions range from central business districts to economic unions between countries, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Some entities, such as the European Union, are both political and economic alliances.

What political and economic divisions do you come across in your everyday life? How are they relevant to your life? Why do you think these divisions exist? Why are they important?



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A variety of international organizations and alliances exist to allow countries to cooperate with one another. Examples of political alliances include the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). These organizations serve as loosely governing authorities over member countries and expect members to adhere to certain standards and rules.

The European Union is both a political and an economic alliance of many European countries. These countries joined together to strengthen Europe's position in world trade and defense.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between Canada, the United States, and Mexico allows these three countries to trade easily with each other without the imposition of tariffs (import taxes).



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The United Nations has 191 member countries. The UN is famous for its humanitarian work in places of war and environmental crisis, but it serves numerous other functions, including assisting refugees, farmers, children, small businesses, and other groups around the world who are not necessarily high up in the “power structures” of their societies. It also plays an important role in helping to eradicate and prevent diseases—in particular, infectious diseases, tropical diseases, AIDS, and other preventable maladies that pose serious problems for people in developing countries.

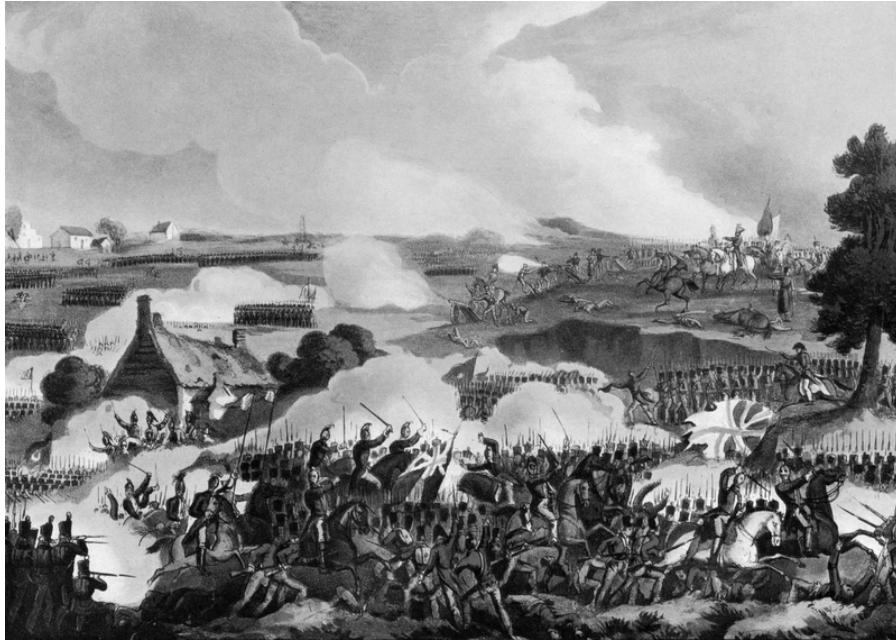
The next time you read the newspaper or a news magazine, look for mentions of the United Nations.



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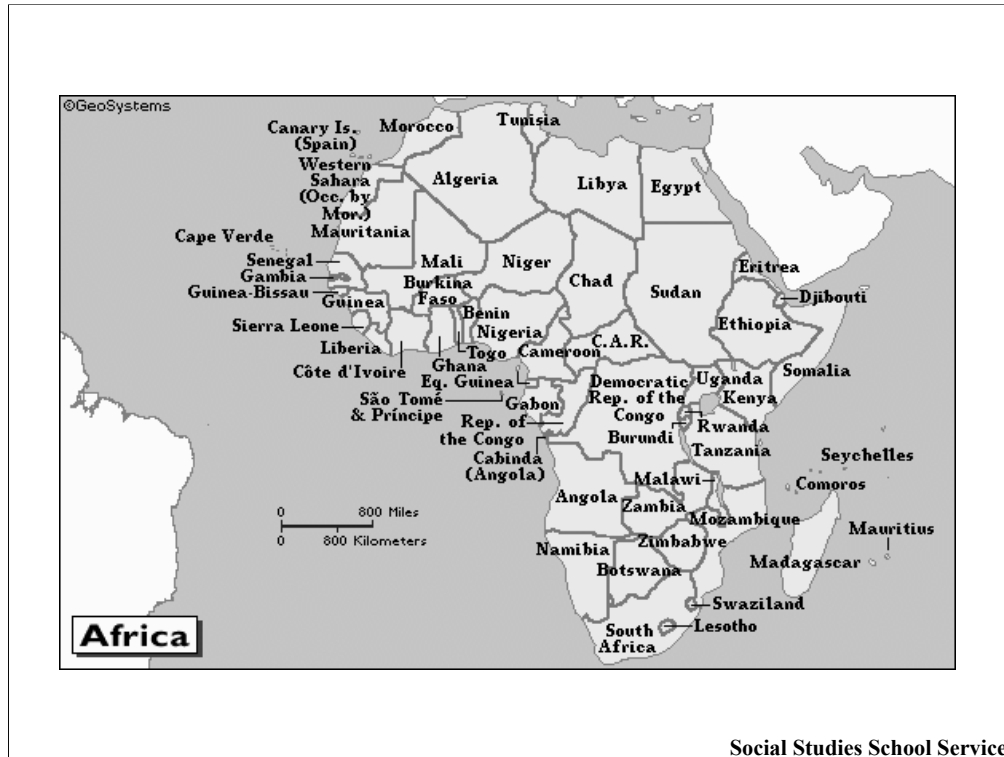
Conflict between people over the control of the earth's spatial divisions occurs often. Conflict results from a number of complex and diverse reasons, but it frequently results from a scarcity of resources in one area or the desire to acquire more of a limited resource such as water or oil. Other times, conflict results when an individual leader or group of leaders want more territory to control. Conflict on a local scale can result from disagreement over how to use land, as when farmers conflict with builders who want to develop farmland into homes or malls.

What types of land-related disputes have you heard about in the news? Are you familiar with any disputes in your community? What was the disagreement, and what was the outcome?



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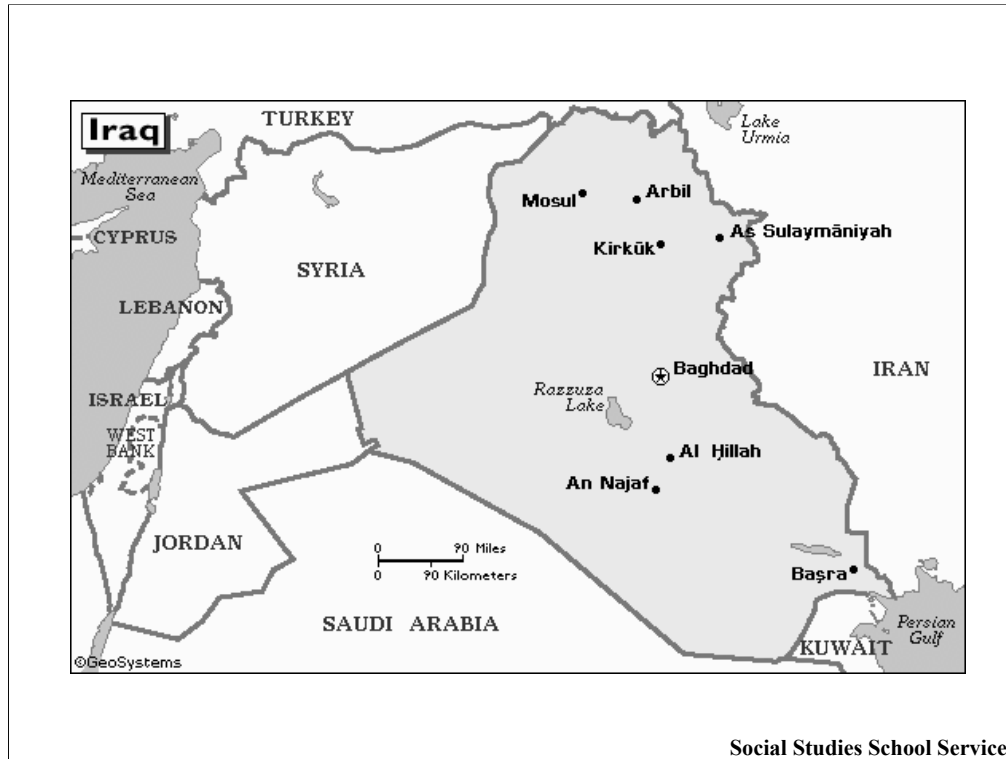
Countries have fought over territory for millennia and continue to do so today. These conflicts often arise due to disagreements over ownership of natural resources or between religious or ethnic groups.



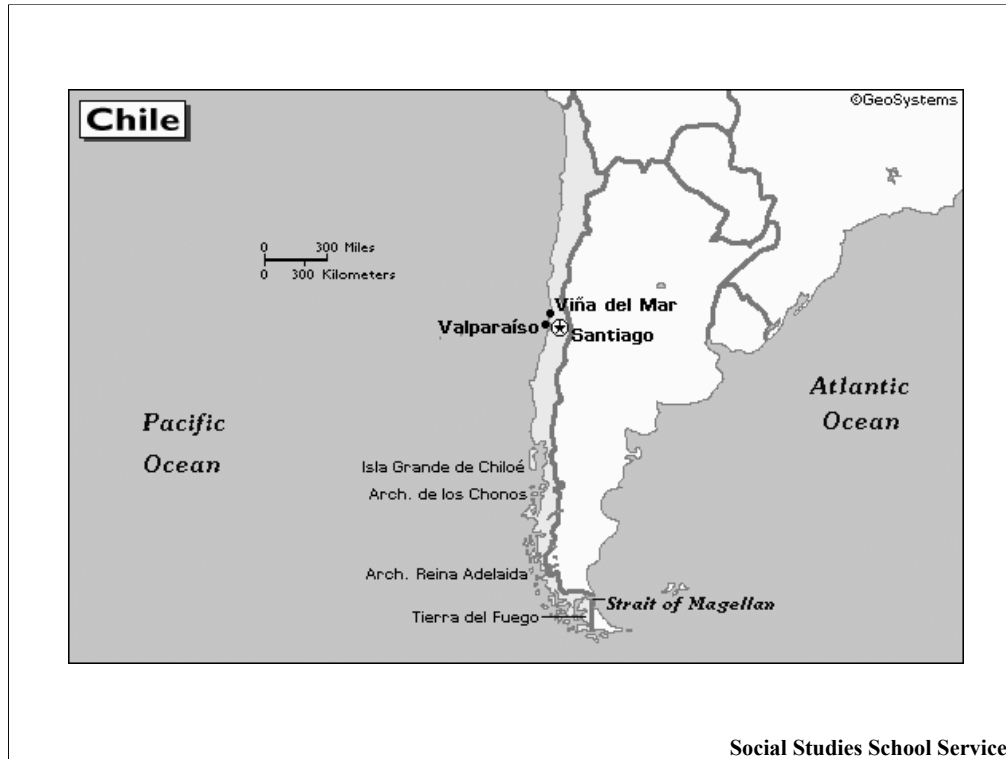
After World War I, the European colonial powers divided land in Africa and the Middle East into colonies with discrete boundaries. Many of these boundaries, however, did not take into account natural divisions of culture, religion, language, and tradition. This left many colonies with competing cultural groups and left many cultural groups straddled between two or more colonies. Once the colonies gained their independence, they generally retained their colonial boundaries; thus, the internal sources of conflict remained.



One example of conflict like this can be seen in Nigeria in West Africa. A former British colony, Nigeria has many ethnic groups that have experienced long-standing conflict, dating well before the arrival of the British. The British determined Nigeria's boundaries, combining the predominantly Muslim north with the mainly Christian South. Strife between these diverse cultural groups continues to this day and contributes significantly to Nigeria's political instability.

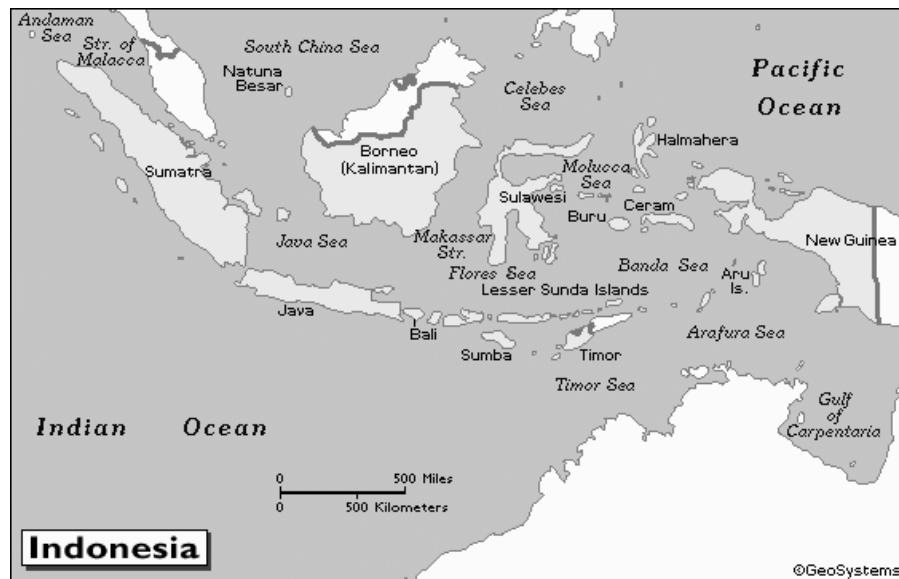


The Kurdish people live in Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. They would like to have their own country, but none of the countries in which they live will cede land to grant them this wish. Kurds are persecuted and discriminated against in each of these countries and have staged numerous uprisings to protest this treatment and to assert their desire for autonomy.



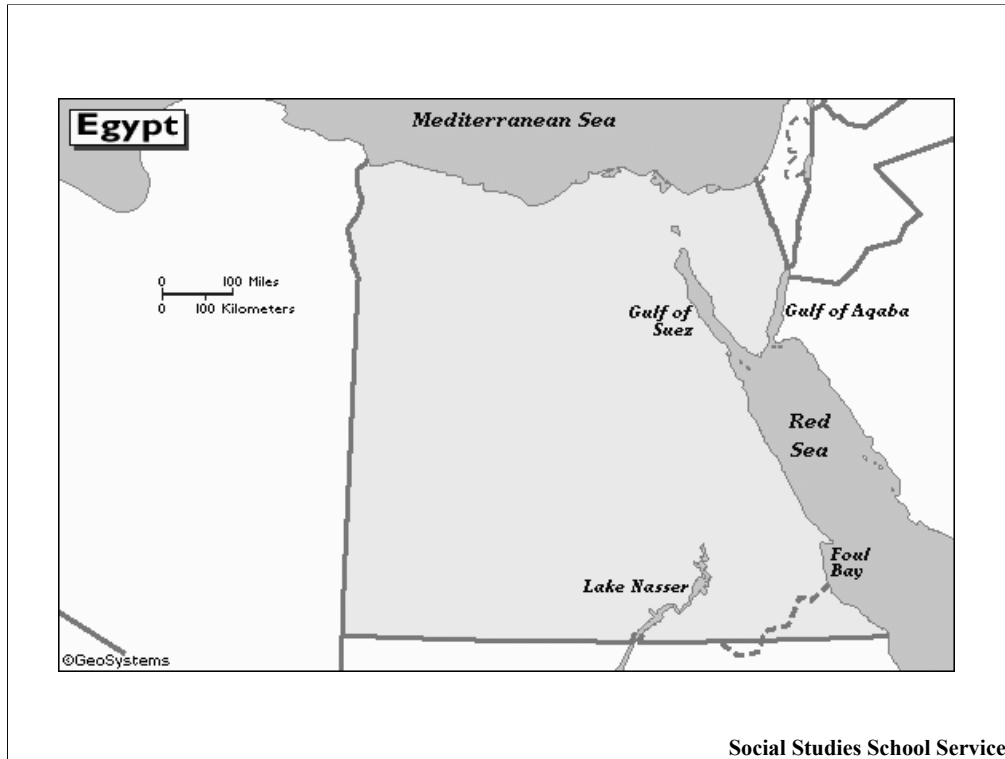
Look at the shapes of the countries shown on this and the next two slides. How do you think the shape of a country might affect the ability of its government to govern and of its people to feel a sense of unity with everyone else in their country? What do you think might be some of the challenges of governing irregularly-shaped countries?

Chile, shown here, is very long and “thin.”



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Indonesia is a country of more than 17,000 islands, only 6000 of which are inhabited.



Egypt is rather rectangular.



Here we see the map of Indonesia again. Many different cultural groups inhabit these islands. Although Bahasa Indonesia is the official language, Indonesians speak a multitude of regional languages. While 88 percent of Indonesians are Muslim, the country also has a sizable Christian minority. Ethnic Chinese also make up a significant portion of the population.

What challenges do you suppose are involved in governing Indonesia? How might things in this country change as communication technologies continue to develop and spread throughout the country?



**Grant and Lee,
1865**

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What are some reasons why conflict might arise within a country? How might differences between cultural groups lead to conflict?

What types of conflicts have occurred (and occur today) within the United States? The United States is a multicultural country; why do you think cultures in this country are not at war with each other like in some other countries?



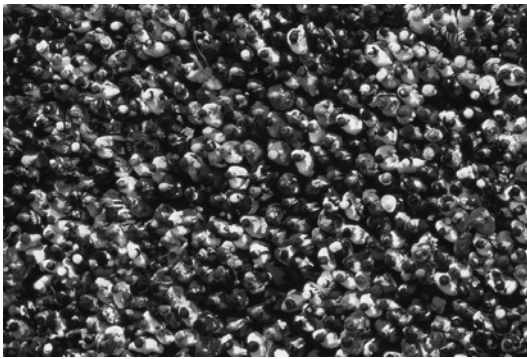
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Think about capital cities of countries, states, or provinces. Why are they symbolically important? How does a capital city help a country, state, or province maintain a sense of unity?

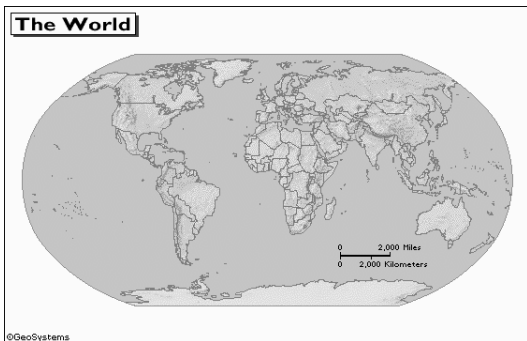


Human Systems

Social Studies School Service



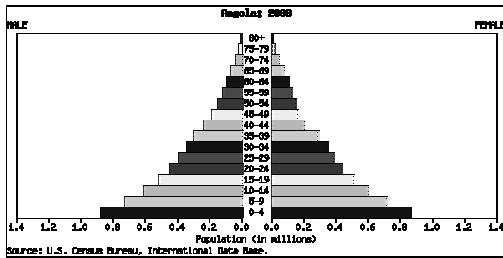
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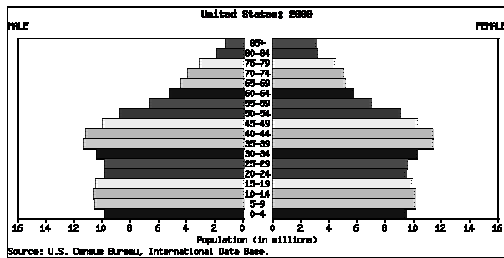
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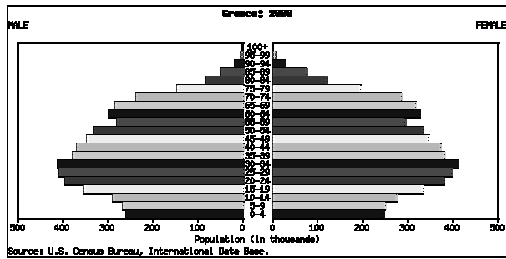
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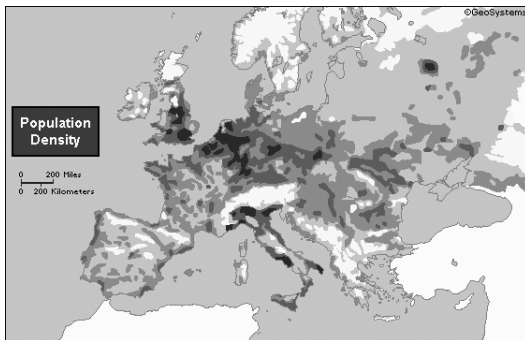
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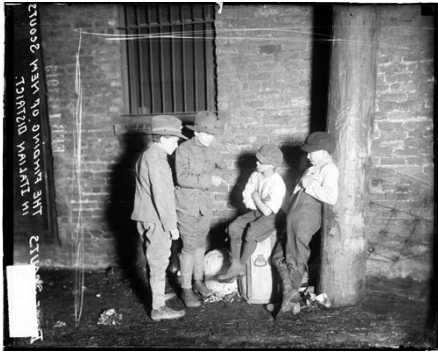
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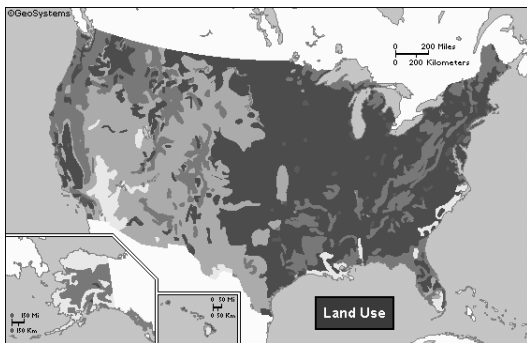
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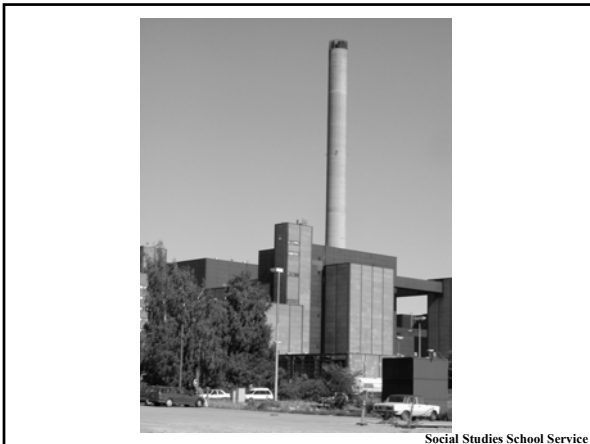
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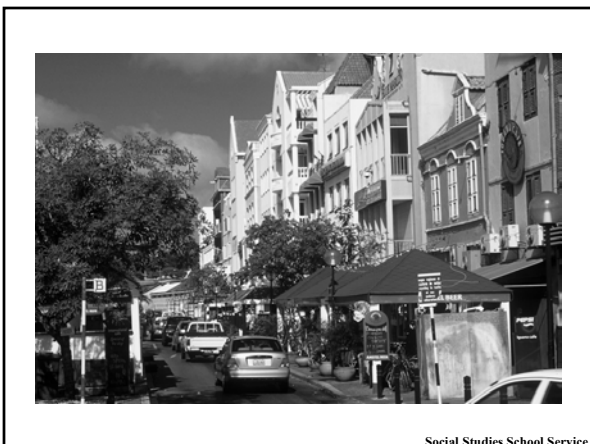
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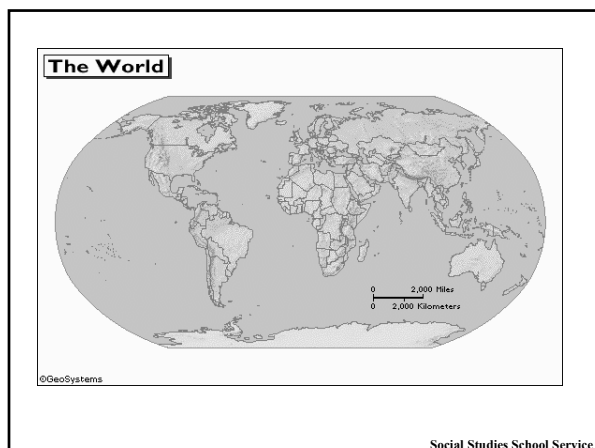
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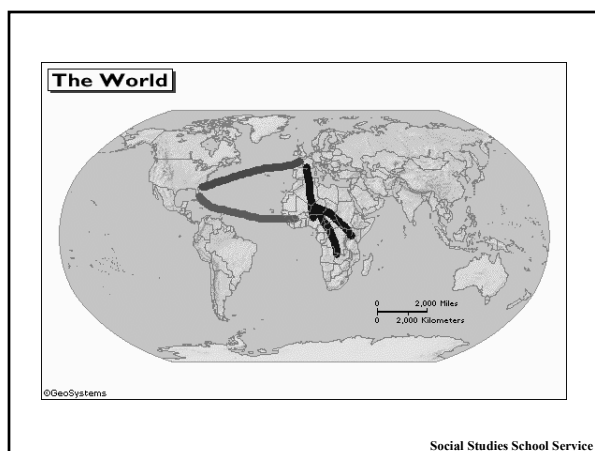
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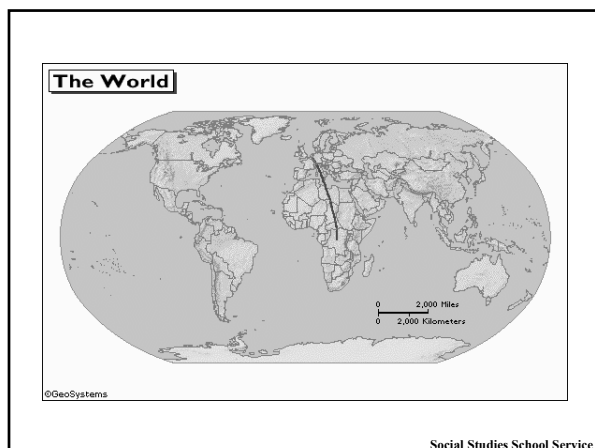


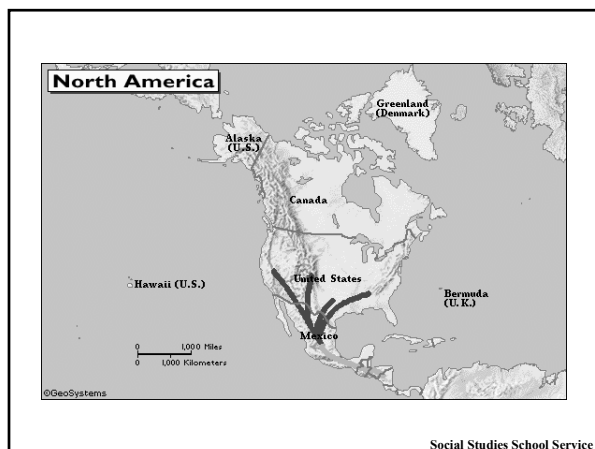
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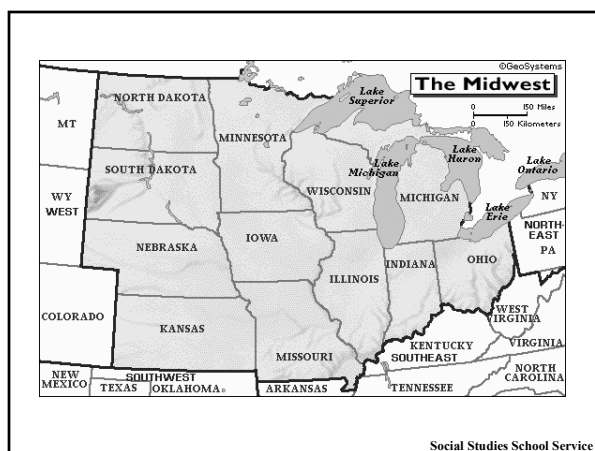














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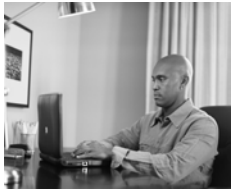
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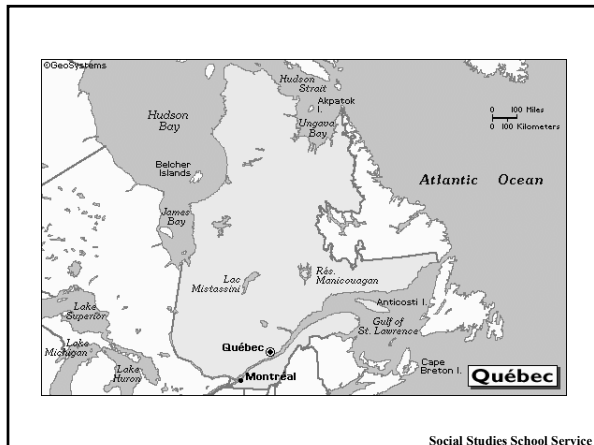
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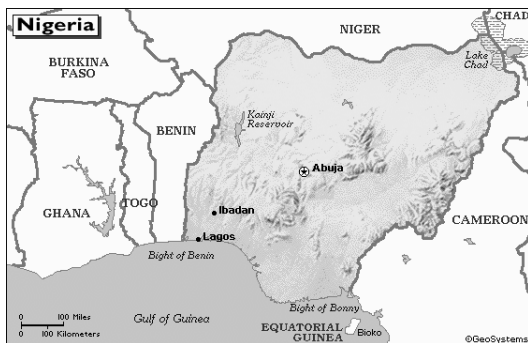
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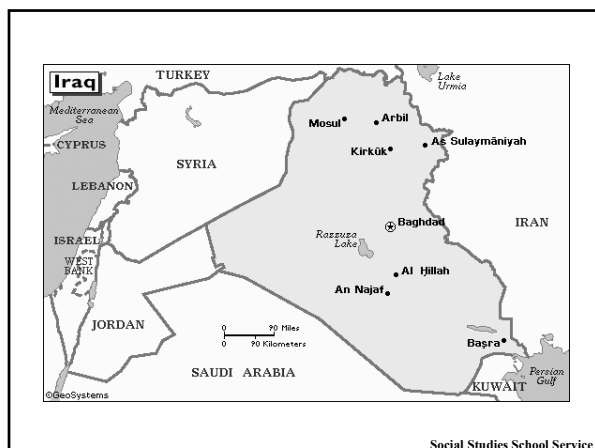
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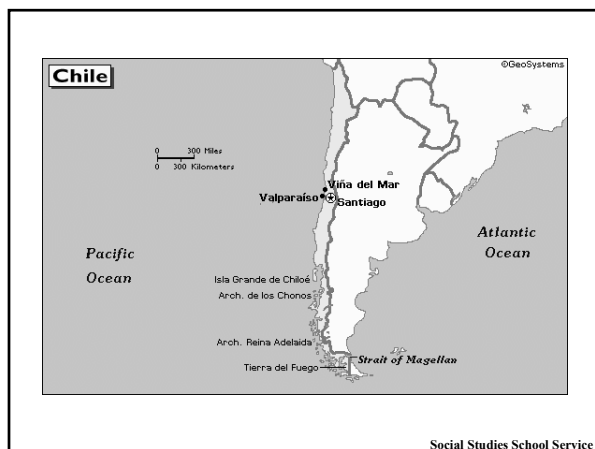


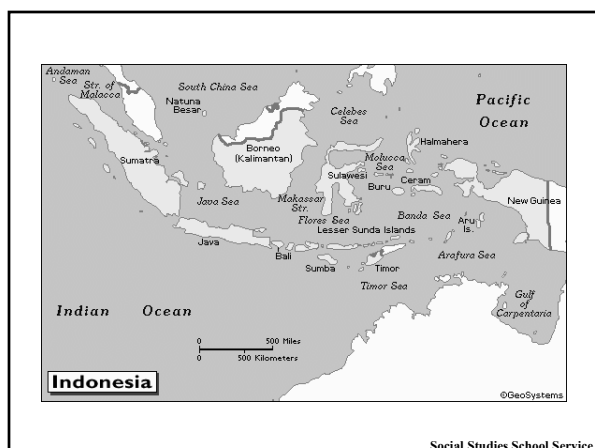
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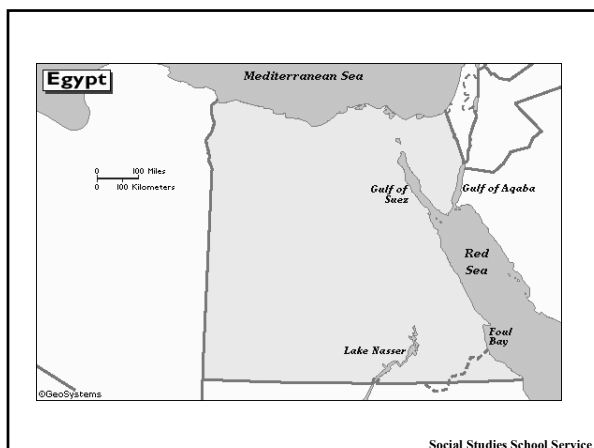


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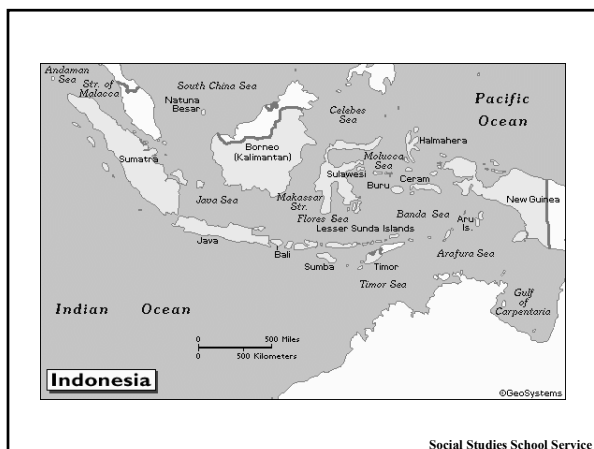




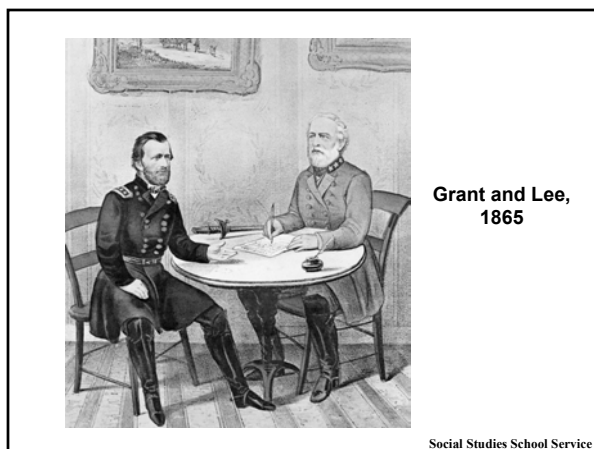




Social Studies School Service



Social Studies School Service



Social Studies School Service



Social Studies School Service

Multiple Choice Questions—Human Systems

1. How do you think the birth rates of Angola, Bolivia, and Cambodia would compare to those of the United States, Sweden, and Australia?
 - a. The first three countries would have lower birth rates.
 - b. The first three countries would have higher birth rates.
 - c. There would be no difference between the two groups.
 - d. It would be impossible to determine whether a real difference exists.
2. Which country's population pyramid would most closely resemble a true triangle, with a very wide base that narrows up to a tiny top?
 - a. France
 - b. The United States
 - c. Afghanistan
 - d. Canada
3. For people emigrating from a developing country to the United States, which of the following offers an example of a "push" factor?
 - a. The United States offers better job opportunities.
 - b. The United States accepts refugees and legal migrants each year.
 - c. Communities in developing countries often have strong cultural ties and traditions.
 - d. Developing countries tend to provide few economic opportunities for the average person.
4. Which of the following does not provide a good example of how immigration might affect the characteristics of a place?
 - a. In some neighborhoods of London, street signs are written in both English and Bengali.
 - b. Increasing numbers of Mexican restaurants have opened throughout the United States.
 - c. Some people have protested the influx of new immigrants into their town.
 - d. Most Mexican Americans eat hamburgers and French fries.
5. Which of the following best defines the word "culture" as it's used in the study of geography?
 - a. a group's language, customs, religion, belief system, technology, art, food, and traditions
 - b. an individual's view of the world and its people
 - c. art museums and symphony orchestras
 - d. a sample of cells grown in a test tube

6. Which of the following is an example of cultural convergence?
- a. People of all ages participate in the Greek festival in Athens.
 - b. Most Italians are Catholic.
 - c. People from all over Latin America gather to share their musical traditions.
 - d. A group of Vietnamese artists have created a Web site to celebrate their artistic traditions.
7. Which of the following is a secondary economic activity?
- a. selling insurance to a clothing factory
 - b. sewing cotton clothing in a factory
 - c. farming cotton
 - d. promoting the annual Cotton Festival
8. Which of the following examples does not describe how towns in the United States have changed over the past few decades?
- a. People tend to shop downtown more than they did 50 years ago.
 - b. Some downtowns are now virtually deserted because people shop in malls on the outskirts of town.
 - c. Many “factory towns” have suffered as plants closed or decreased their workforces.
 - d. Increasingly, a town’s retail businesses are operated by corporations headquartered in other cities.
9. Why have many factories in the United States shut down?
- a. Too many people have picketed the factories and boycotted their products.
 - b. A shortage of labor in the United States has forced them to close.
 - c. Many towns have tried to get rid of factories because they find them “ugly.”
 - d. Labor is cheaper in other countries.
10. Why would a new shopping center want to be able to map its market area?
- a. to find out the locations of potential customers
 - b. to design its floor plan and parking lots
 - c. to learn about new trends in advertising
 - d. to cooperate with local radio stations

11. Which of the following statements best illustrates the relationship between a colonizing country and its colony?
- a. The colonizing power always ensures the well being of the colony's residents.
 - b. The people of the colony generally benefit from an increase in job opportunities and higher salaries offered by the colonizing country.
 - c. The colonizing power profits from the colony's natural resources.
 - d. The economy of the colonizing country rarely benefits from economic activities in the colony.
12. Which of the following factors might lead a farmer to move his or her farm to a new location?
- a. fewer conflicts with suburban developers
 - b. the introduction of refrigerated rail cars
 - c. steadily increasing farm profits
 - d. increased access to the railroad or trucking routes in the farm's current location
13. How would the development of a new row of restaurants and a multiplex probably affect land values in a downtown area?
- a. values would decrease
 - b. values would stay the same
 - c. values would increase
 - d. values would decrease at first, but then increase
14. Which of the following statements best explains the emergence of cities?
- a. The development of agriculture allowed people to achieve a food surplus.
 - b. People were seeking more accessible places to practice their religions.
 - c. A merchant class emerged to sell agricultural produce and crafts.
 - d. People needed more military protection, which could only be provided in cities.
15. Which statement best describes a city that's built according to the concentric zone model?
- a. Fred would prefer to shop and do his banking in a downtown business district, but this isn't possible because there are no longer any businesses downtown.
 - b. Alison lives in a small house on a hill downtown, from which she can see the skyscrapers of the distant suburbs.
 - c. Joe lives in a high-rise apartment building in one part of the city and drives his car to work in a high-rise office building on the other side of town.
 - d. Jennifer, along with 100,000 other people, commutes downtown from an outlying residential neighborhood.

16. What is one impact of the growth of edge cities?
- a. Traffic has increased substantially in areas several miles from the city.
 - b. More businesses have chosen to locate their headquarters in the centers of large cities.
 - c. People experience difficult commutes downtown each morning.
 - d. Fewer people are moving to the suburbs.
17. Which of the following is not a common reason for conflict between groups of people?
- a. religious differences
 - b. scarcity of resources
 - c. cultural convergence
 - d. differences in opinion over how land should be used
18. What is one impact of the way European powers divided African and Middle Eastern colonies after World War I?
- a. The colonies gained their independence.
 - b. Religious groups within the colonies became increasingly tolerant of each other.
 - c. The colonies were shaped according to cultural and language distinctions.
 - d. Many colonies were home to numerous cultural groups that did not get along with each other.
19. Why might Indonesia face special challenges in maintaining its national unity?
- a. It was once a Dutch colony.
 - b. It's a long archipelago of tens of thousands of islands with great cultural and linguistic diversity.
 - c. It is relatively square-shaped.
 - d. It is the world's largest Muslim country.
20. Which of the following best describes the United Nations?
- a. the body that oversees all the world's democracies
 - b. an international alliance dedicated to protecting the world's economies
 - c. an alliance of European and North American countries
 - d. an alliance of countries, focusing on humanitarian and social concerns

Multiple Choice Questions—Human Systems

Answer Key

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answer: b

2. Which country's population pyramid would most closely resemble a true triangle, with a very wide base that narrows up to a tiny top?
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answer: c

3. For people emigrating from a developing country to the United States, which of the following offers an example of a "push" factor?
 - a. The United States offers better job opportunities.
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 - c. Communities in developing countries often have strong cultural ties and traditions.
 - d. Developing countries tend to provide few economic opportunities for the average person.

answer: d

4. Which of the following does not provide a good example of how immigration might affect the characteristics of a place?
 - a. In some neighborhoods of London, street signs are written in both English and Bengali.
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answer: d

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answer: a

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answer: c

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answer: a

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answer: a

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answer: c

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answer: b

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answer: a

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- d. Jennifer, along with 100,000 other people, commutes downtown from an outlying residential neighborhood.

answer: d

16. What is one impact of the growth of edge cities?

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answer: a

17. Which of the following is NOT a common reason for conflict between groups of people?

- a. religious differences
- b. scarcity of resources
- c. cultural convergence
- d. differences in opinion over how land should be used

answer: c

18. What of the following resulted from the way European powers divided African and Middle Eastern colonies after World War I?

- a. The colonies gained their independence.
- b. Religious groups within the colonies became increasingly tolerant of each other.
- c. The colonies were shaped according to cultural and language distinctions.
- d. Many colonies were home to numerous cultural groups that did not get along with each other.

answer: d

19. Why might Indonesia face special challenges in maintaining its national unity?

- a. It was once a Dutch colony.
- b. It's a long archipelago of tens of thousands of islands with great cultural and linguistic diversity.
- c. It is relatively square-shaped.
- d. It is the world's largest Muslim country.

answer: b

20. Which of the following best describes the United Nations?

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- b. an international alliance dedicated to protecting the world's economies
- c. an alliance of European and North American countries
- d. an alliance of countries that focuses on humanitarian and social concerns

answer: d

Discussion Questions

Slide 11

- How did the massive influx of immigrants from Europe into the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries alter the cultural and economic characteristics of the United States?

Slide 15

- What factors encourage migration?
- Why do you think people choose to leave their homelands?

Slide 18

- Why do people move from rural to urban areas?
- Why has this occurred in the past, and why does it continue today throughout the world?

Slide 21

- How has your city or area changed as immigrants have arrived from different countries, both in the recent and more distant past?

Slide 23

- In what ways does migration affects the natural environment?

Slide 25

- What environmental factors can alter the distribution of the earth's population?

Slide 26

- Some countries have taken political steps to limit population growth. China has perhaps the strictest policy, limiting most couples to one child; however, it's difficult to enforce this regulation. What would you think if the United States implemented similar policies?
- What are the pros and cons of the government implementing policies to curb population growth?
- Can you think of any other ways in which a country could limit its population growth?

Slide 27

- What is culture?

Slide 29

- What do you think it would be like to move to a place where the culture is very different from what you're used to?
- How would you adjust?
- What would you like to learn from other cultures?

Slide 32

- What is “Americanization,” and how does it affect people in other parts of the world?
- What are the pros and cons of Americanization?

Slide 33

- Come up with some examples of cultural convergence.

Slide 37–38

- In what parts of your town or state do secondary economic activities take place?
- In what parts of your town or state do tertiary economic activities occur?

Slide 39

- Picture a map of your town. Could you divide it into sections where different types of economic activities occur?
- Where do your parents work?
- Where would you go shopping for a new outfit?
- Where do you go out to eat?
- Where would your parents go if they needed to apply for a bank loan or get their car fixed?

Slide 40

- Does your city have a lively downtown?
- Where do most people shop?
- Where do most people head when they go out for dinner or lunch?
- Where do you and your friends like to spend your time?

Slide 41

- How do you think the closing of a factory impacts a town and its residents? What if the town has relied on the factory for a long time as a primary feature of its economy?

Slide 42

- What market areas exist in your community?

Slide 44

- The United States buys much of its oil from OPEC countries. How would an increase in prices affect the daily lives of people in the United States?
- How might a price increase impact the production of goods that the United States intends to export?
- How might changes to exports affect the lives of people in the countries to which the United States sends its goods?

Slide 47

- What economic benefits do United States companies and farms obtain from hiring migrant workers?
- What difficulties might exist with this employer-worker relationship?

Slide 49

- What role do climate, bodies of water, agricultural activities, and transportation routes play in an industry's or a business' decision of where to be located?

Slide 51

- Many people frequently use express mail services to deliver letters and packages overnight from the United States to places as distant as China and Russia. How do you think this ability has affected global business?

Slide 55

- In addition to transportation, communication developments have also had a profound impact on global economic activities. What examples can you think of that illustrate this trend?
- How do you think cell phones, faxes, pagers, computers, and other communications technologies have altered business practices in the United States and in other countries?

Slide 62

- In what ways do you think population growth might impact an urban area?
- How can growth affect a metropolitan area's infrastructure (transportation, water supply, sewage treatment, garbage collection, police and fire protection services, etc.)?
- What happens to job availability when a city's population grows?
- How are these factors affected when a metropolitan area's population declines?

Slides 63–64

- How accurately do you think the concentric zone model describes cities in the United States?
- How well does the concentric zone model apply to cities with which you're familiar?
- Why do some cities follow the concentric zone model more closely than others?

Slide 65

- What sectors exist in your town?
- How distinct are the divisions between sectors?

Slide 69

- What political and economic divisions do you come across in your everyday life?
- How are they relevant to your life?
- Why do you think these divisions exist?
- Why are they important?

Slide 72

- What types of land-related disputes have you heard about in the news?
- Are you familiar with any disputes in your community?
- What was the disagreement, and what was the outcome?

Slide 81

- What are some reasons why conflict might arise within a country?
- How might differences between cultural groups lead to conflict?
- What types of conflicts have occurred (and occur today) within the United States?
- The United States is a multicultural country; why do you think cultures in this country are not at war with each other like in some other countries?

Slide 82

- Think about capital cities of countries, states, or provinces. Why are they symbolically important?
- How does a capital city help a country, state, or province maintain a sense of unity?

Extension Activities

1. Find out the birth, death, and infant mortality rates for two “Western” countries (e.g., the United States and Germany) and two developing countries (e.g., Iran and Mozambique). In a short essay, compare and contrast the rates for these countries and speculate why rates are different in different areas and what the impacts of these rates might be.
2. Use newspapers and magazines to research immigration issues in the news today. Identify “pull” and “push” factors for the immigrants discussed in the articles and try to determine the ways in which these immigrant groups change the characteristics of the places to which they move. Write a report on your findings, concluding an assessment of any pro- and anti-immigrant sentiments expressed in the articles.
3. Research a country very different from your own to find out what daily life is like there. Write a story or dialogue about a person arriving in the United States from that country. What new things might that person experience, and how might he or she react? Next, write a story about what it might be like for you to go to that person’s country. Try to be as realistic as you can, based on the things you’ve learned in your research.
4. Map the locations of primary, secondary, and tertiary economic activities in your hometown. Write labels on or next to the map to show where each type of activity occurs.
5. Research a conflict occurring in the world today. Find out where the conflict is, who’s involved, and why the conflict arose in the first place. Write an essay describing your findings and state your opinion on how this conflict might be resolved.

Related Web Sites

U.S. Census Bureau

<http://www.census.gov>

Access all sorts of population data for the United States. Link to the American FactFinder to search data for your neighborhood, your state, or the entire country.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

<http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home>

This site provides information about current refugee situations and refugee groups around the world.

Coming to America: In Search of the American Dream: Immigrant Voices

http://library.thinkquest.org/CR0212700/final_website/?tqskip1=1

This site, developed by a fifth grade class from New York City, tells the stories of student immigrants in their own words and using primary documents from their families. It also provides some general information about immigration to the United States.

Commanding Heights: The Battle for the World Economy

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/commandingheights/lo/index.html>

This is the companion Web site to the PBS program of the same name. It features economic histories and current roles of numerous countries, key people who play a role in the global economy, a timeline of key events in the development of the global economy, and videos and transcripts from the program.

Family Traditions

<http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/folklore/peter/index.html>

Explore this site to learn about festivals and holidays, weddings, maturity rites of passage, birth and death, folk art, and food in different parts of the world.

The Odyssey: World Trek for Service and Education

<http://www.worldtrek.org/odyssey>

Follow the travels of the Odyssey team to Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, India, and China to learn about present-day culture and daily life in these regions.